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ABSTRACT

This publication describes plans for one of three subsidiary studies related to a larger research program concerned with the interrelationship of educational qualifications and employment. The purpose of the particular study described here is to trace how educated young people in Kenya and Sri Lanka who cannot immediately gain employment change their criteria regarding acceptable employment over time, and how they adopt varying tactics for securing employment. The study has two main objectives: 1) to clarify fresh graduates' sets of expectations and criteria about "acceptable" jobs, and 2) to trace the process of tradeoff between the reality of the job market and the standards of the job seeker. Through this investigation, the researchers hope to identify some pointers on developing sounder schemes of employment for educated young people. (Author/JG)

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QUALIFICATION AND SELECTION IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

A Programme of Research

part II: Job-seekers and Job Placement Services

IDS Discussion Paper no. 71

April 1975

Summary

Protracted unemployment amongst the graduates of schools and universities is a problem in a number of countries. Yet, as a group of graduates grows older, the problem seems to ease and an increasing proportion of them find work. What has made the difference? Does the explanation lie with the employers or with changes within the job-seekers themselves? The research described here hopes first to clarify those sets of expectations and criteria about 'acceptable' jobs with which fresh graduates embark upon the search for employment. Its second hope is to trace the process of trade-off between the reality of the job market and the standards of the job-seeker. From this should emerge some pointers on how schemes of employment for schooled young people might be more soundly devised.

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Preface

We are concerned, as many are, at the failure of large numbers of school and university graduates in many countries, either to find the kind of employment that they want, or to accept the employment that might be available, or to create their own forms of self-employment. The research, which is described here and which we hope to undertake in Kenya and Sri Lanka, is related to a larger programme to do with educational qualifications and employment. This parent effort examines mainly why and how employers use qualifications to select employees; whether these practices seem justified; and how they affect what goes on in schools.

There are three subsidiary studies. One looks at educational developments in China since 1966, particularly at the attempt to break the direct link between initial schooling and employment. A second examines how curricular reform might be influenced by mechanisms of educational assessment and qualifications. The third, which is described here, traces how people, whose qualifications have not secured them employment immediately, change their criteria about acceptable employment over time, and adopt varying tactics in locating employment.

We are glad to acknowledge here the assistance we have had from a number of people. We owe a particular debt to those individuals - and their organisations - who came to a conference to help improve our proposals for implementing the research.

This project has been encouraged by and is funded by a grant from, the Commonwealth Youth Programme of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

B.T.Mook
J.C.P.Oxenham

Job Seekers and Job Placement Services.

Note: This study has been accepted in Kenya and Sri Lanka.

Rationale.

The objectives of the study of 'Job Seekers and Job Placement Services' are:

> To describe the ambitions and job-stereotypes of graduates from various levels of education; to elucidate the criteria by which occupations are judged to be "suitable"; and to assess what sorts of trade-off are made between criteria, when not all of them can be satisfied;
>
> To evaluate the tactics which school leavers use to find jobs, (e.g. employment exchanges, newspaper advertisements, personal connections, etc.); and
>
> To make policy recommendations on alternative strategies for assisting young people to see and more rapidly to use opportunities for employment or self-employment, which may not at first appear "suitable" to them.

The importance of the problem of "educated unemployment" hardly needs documenting. In almost all countries of Asia and Africa today, available manpower far outstrips the number of jobs available in the desired 'modern sector'. The long-term answer is clearly fewer educated aspirants and/or more jobs. But - in the short-term - the concern of policy-makers must be with fitting proper people to proper slots and with helping them to adjust to the slots available, even if these slots include forms of self-employment.

These policy-makers therefore need to know what kind of jobs people want, what kinds of jobs they will take under what circumstances, and how best they can be put in touch with these jobs. They need to know, too, how opportunities for employment might be shaped so as to be more easily acceptable to the educated.

Questions.

The precise questions to be asked in the study include:

1) Expectations and Stereotypes of Jobs:

> What different kinds of school-leavers have what different kinds of job expectations? Why do they see one job as desirable and another as only minimally acceptable? How extensive is their knowledge of the range of possibilities open? What perceptions do they have of the content, conditions, potential of various forms of self-employment?

2) Seeking a Job:

How do school-leavers first go about finding a job? Are school placement services helpful? What kinds of people depend on personal connections? Who uses employment exchanges (and what use do they make of them?) Who answers newspaper advertisements? What other tactics do people use?

3) Changes:

How do job expectations change as the job-search continues? In what ways do job-seekers alter the relative emphases which they place on status, security, prospects and salary? How are disappointments rationalized? What new tactics do people adopt? Which are adopted with any real hope of success, and which only because they are expected or required?

Procedures.

1. Search of the Literature.

A list of all the literature identified and studied is given at Appendix A, with annotations. As further literature becomes available, it will be studied and notified with comment to the field researchers and others interested.

II. Selection of Samples.

The study is, at least in the first instance, to be done in Kenya and Sri Lanka. Selection of the samples will naturally be determined by the circumstances of the two countries.

a) Levels of Education.

In the first place, there are differences in the incidence of unemployment among different groups of educated people. In Sri Lanka, all school-leavers, including university graduates, have extreme difficulty in finding suitable employment. In Kenya, by contrast, university graduates and those holding senior school leaving certificates ('A' levels) are still readily absorbed by employers. On the other hand, those with ordinary school leaving certificates ('O' level), cannot be certain of a job, while those with primary school certificates have a small chance indeed of being employed quickly.

In Kenya, therefore, only persons with ordinary secondary or primary school certificates will be included in the sample. In Sri Lanka, secondary school leavers and university graduates will be studied instead, and they will be supplemented by students in the final years of their secondary and university courses.

b) Selecting Interviewees.

The study makes no pretensions to providing samples which can be considered representative of their countries as wholes. Its aim is simply to examine how some employed or unemployed recent school leavers think about earning a livelihood and go about finding one. (Despite this limitation, the location of the study, as described below, should reveal the state of a sufficiently large body of unemployed young people to make its findings useful for at least local, if not national, policy.)

Two approaches suggest themselves as being acceptable in principle for selecting interviewees: the Tracer Study and the House-to-House Investigation. The results of either approach should be comparable with those of the other.

Kenya: A minimum of three hundred interviewees will be contacted. Only those who have graduated or dropped out since January, 1973, will be included.

Three rough areas will be selected in which to conduct interviews. Two will be in Nairobi, one in the environs of a 'rural' secondary school.[1] Of the two Nairobi areas, one will comprise the residential zones of middle level civil servants - i.e. those earning £250+ per annum - and their equivalents in the private sector, the other will cover the poorer parts of the city, such as the shanty towns.

On the assumption that the very highly paid and wealthy families are least affected by unemployment, no attempt will be made to study them. On the assumption that unemployment among males is more keenly felt, the weight of the study will be on males.

A minimum of ten persons per cell will be attempted for the following nine categories: Better Off Urban, Worse Off Urban, Rural, Employed, Unemployed, Male, Female, Primary School, Secondary School. The following scheme illustrates a possible outcome:

	Minimum = 300								Maximum = 540				
	Male = 180				Female = 120				Male = 300			Female = 240	
	Better Off Urban				Worse Off Urban				Rural				
	E		Un		E		Un		E		Un		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
	P S P S	P S P S	P S P S	P S P S	P S P S	P S P S	P S P S	P S P S	P S P S	P S P S	P S P S	P S P S	
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1. This school will probably be part of the larger study of qualifications and employment mentioned in the preface.

The interviewees will be located by house-to-house visits within the areas delimited for study, until the quotas are filled. (It is hoped that among both the unemployed and employed there will be a range of experience of unemployment.) Where it seems desirable, young people waiting at employment exchanges, attending morning or afternoon cinema shows or other entertainments offered during working hours, sitting around markets or outside offices and factories, will also be interviewed.

Sri Lanka: Here "tracer" techniques will be used. That is, schools and universities will be asked to provide lists of people, from whom will be drawn samples by random selection. Those selected for interview will be invited by letter to assist the study by agreeing to be interviewed. The sample size will be at least 300.

Respondents will be drawn from two secondary schools and two universities at the rates of 25 final year students, 25 leavers last year, 25 leavers two years previously. The ratio between males and females will be 3:2 approximately.

One school will be in Colombo, but not of high prestige, on the assumption that graduates of the high prestige schools have substantially less than average difficulty in securing employment. The other will be 'rural', and will again not be of high prestige. (Whether or not a school is of 'high prestige' will be determined through conversations and through whatever study is possible of the 'success' rates and volumes in the secondary school graduating examinations).

Of the two universities, or university campuses, one is expected to be Peradenia; the other will be decided later. As implied earlier, the samples will be drawn randomly with the only stratification being set between males and females. There will be no attempt to stratify, for example, by faculty or main subject of study: as the size of the sub-sample at each university will comprise only 75 persons, further stratification would lead to very small numbers within cells. However, such differences as do occur in success in finding employment or in techniques of seeking employment between, say, social scientists and engineers, will be charted as closely as the data allow.

Tracing persons by letter is notoriously hazardous and expensive. In order to ease the problem of locating respondents, not only will pre-paid and addressed post-cards be sent to each subject, asking him/her to nominate his own date, time and place of interview, but a small incentive - perhaps Rs.10 (£0.50) - will also be offered to each person who returns the postcard and completes the interview.

As in Kenya, where casual opportunities, e.g. at

employment exchanges, for interviews offer themselves, they will be used to the extent possible.

III. Interviews.

No questionnaires will be used. Instead, interviews will be conducted conversationally so as to cover the topics under study. (Interviewers will be trained both in interviewing and in making post facto notes of interviews). The interviews are expected to last between one and three hours, so that no more than two or three interviews per day will be conducted by any one interviewer. There will naturally be slight differences between interviews, according to whether the respondent is employed or not.

The following broad areas will be investigated:

a) Activities during the past week (less relevant in the case of the steadily employed).

Doings of the past week? Now? Main varieties of activity. If not employed, how are you supported? How long could this go on? Do you envy your class-mates, as regards employment luck? How many of them have secured employment?

b) Job Expectations.

Any employment guidance at school/university? What do/did you hope to be on graduation? How did you do in exams? Did you expect to leave school when you did? If not, what made you leave? If not in hoped-for job, what is the range of alternative acceptable occupations? Range of "last-ditch" alternatives? Range of "never acceptable" possibilities: what makes them "never acceptable"? Would there be ways of making them acceptable? If employed, are you satisfied with present job? If so, why? If not, why? What would make it better? What do your family/friends think about your present status, (employed or unemployed)? Any pressures? What sorts of work would your family/friends think fit/unfit for you? What do you hope to be doing in five years time?

(To be elicited indirectly: how important relatively are social status, steadiness of employment, security of employment, security of old age provision, starting salary levels, prospects of improvement?)

c) Search for Employment.

How long after graduation did you begin looking for work? If there was a gap between graduation and search, why? Where did search begin? Method of search and order in which tried. Opinion of different methods. How did family and friends try to help? Any interviews with employers? What experiences? What grounds, if any, given for rejection of application? How long between start of search and start of first

job? How was first job (a) learned about (b) obtained? Have you had offers which you turned down; took up, but quit; took up, but were laid off? In what ways has your education been useful in getting a job, in doing it, in holding on, in changing?

d) Possibilities of Other Employment.

Could you have worked on family land or business? If so, why not? Have you heard of government development/resettlement/national service schemes? Which ones? Have you tried to get in? In what capacity? If you have not tried, why not? If you have tried, what possible reasons for failure or application?

e) Opinions on ranges of self-employment/apprenticeship.

How would you describe to foreigners the lives of various occupations, (e.g. farmers, big landowners, plantation managers, people with own crafts or trading business, secondary agricultural occupations and businesses)? What advantages and drawbacks do you see in these occupations? What is your family's/general society's opinion of the people in these occupations (e.g. educated/illiterate; low/high status; respectable/rogues; important/nonentities)?

f) Opinion on government's role in creating employment.

What causes unemployment?

What should the government do about it, if it can do anything?

How might people like you help the government to help you?

g) Biodata.

The following biodata will be requested from each interviewee (probably at the end of the interview).

Sex

Age

Birthplace

School record - schools attended; date finally left school; final level attained; subjects and grades at final level; repetitions.

Health Record

Family circumstances; father's/mother's education
father's/mother's occupation
number of siblings

Relationship to head of house where currently resident

Date of arrival in town

Mother tongue

Cast/Tribe (if permissible)

Visits to home

APPENDIX A.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, J.E. Primary school leavers in rural areas.
Institute for Development Studies (Nairobi)
Discussion paper No. 39. December 1966.

A follow up study of male primary school leavers. Although many were 'unemployed' a year after leaving school they were not 'idle' and were engaged in temporary work for short periods of time.

Asher, Shigeko Mori, Unemployment Among Engineers : An Indian Experience, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Syracuse, 1972. Pages 145 - 53.

Short section on how engineering graduates find jobs.
Data from questionnaires administered to samples of engineering students at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in New Delhi, the University of Roorkee and the Kurukshetra Regional Engineering College.

Major findings.
i) Students at the best of the three schools (IIT) place greatest reliance on personal contacts (25%), newspaper advertisements (23%), the institute's placement service (20%), and the Public Service Commission (18%). They give little weight to employment exchanges (7%).

ii) Students at the worst of the three schools (Kurukshetra) give much greater importance to newspaper advertisements (29%) and employment exchanges (27%), about the same to the Public Service Commission (18%), and much less to personal contacts (11%), and the school's placement service (4%).

Bahadur, P. 'Urban Unemployment : An Estimate Based on Employment Exchange Statistics', in Employment and Unemployment, V.K.R.V.Rao (editor), Bombay Allied Publishers,1968.

Analysis of employment exchange data, with particular emphasis on their limitations. India.

Finds that numbers of people on "live registers" have increased, not only because of increasing unemployment, but also because of :
i) more exchanges;
ii) more "renewal-mindedness" among registrants;
iii) more use of exchanges by people already employed;
iv) more prominence of the public sector (which uses exchanges more than the private sector does).

Stresses the importance for exchange data of changes among registrants in :
i) education;
ii)previous and present employment;
iii)commitment to use of exchanges.

Blaug, Mark, Richard Layard and Maureen Woodhall, The Causes of Graduate Unemployment in India, London, Allen Lane, 1969. Pages 135 - 37.

Short section on how graduates find jobs.

Data from :
i) The Directorate General of Employment and Training, Employment Survey of the Alumni of Delhi University, Ministry of Labour and Employment,(New Delhi, 1962).
ii)The Directorate General of Employment and Training, Report on the Pattern of Graduate Employment, Ministry of Labour and Employment, (New Delhi, 1963).

Major findings:
i) Very few graduates use employment exchanges (6% - 7%).
  a) Newspaper advertisements and personal contacts preferred (57% - 65%).
  b) More use Public Service Commissions for second and subsequent jobs than for first jobs (16%).
ii)Arts and law graduates depend on personal contacts more than do technical and professional graduates.
  a) 2nd's and 3rd's depend more on personal contacts than do 1st's.
iii)In the case of matriculates, newspaper advertisements are more important than for graduates (45%).
  a) And employment exchanges much more important (12%).

Callaway, Archibald, 'Unemployment Among School-Leavers in an African City', Manpower Aspects of Educational Planning, Paris, UNESCO, International Institute for Educational Planning, 1968.

Analyzes the nature and extent of unemployment in Ibadan. Of particular interest to our project are questions relating to the unemployment of educated persons and their search for jobs.
i) Where do they come from?
ii)Who supports them while they search for work?
iii)How realistic are they?
iv)How do they expect to find work?

Data from a sample survey of households in three representative sections of Ibadan. 686 heads of households interviewed (r.e. themselves and all

other members of the household).

Finds that :
i) 78% of the unemployed are school-leavers (22% of the total work force).
ii) The biggest migration from rural areas comes from districts characterized by :
   a) low income;
   b) high pressure on land;
   c) early spread of education.
iii) Most job-seekers stay with relatives
iv) Most believe that government should provide jobs.
v) Expectations vary with SES.
vi) 40% are engaged in some kind of further training (e.g. typing school).

The tightening job market is reflected by :
i) the higher qualifications demanded of applicants;
ii) the rising numbers of applicants;
iii) the lengthening time spent between leaving school and finding work;
iv) the number of former apprentices now jobless;
v) the pressure to improve skills; etc.

Clark, D.H. 'New school leavers in Singapore.' Higher Education, November, 1972.

A tracer study of vocational institute, technical secondary school and academic secondary school students four years after graduation. In terms of returns to social investment there was little difference but as personal investments the vocational institute graduate fared better.

Nair, P.A. Employment Market in an Industrial Metropolis : A Survey of Educated Unemployment in Bombay, Bombay, Lalvani Publishing House, 1968.

Analysis of the employment market in Bombay, using data from the two government employment exchanges in the city.

Variables examined for each registrant : age, education, native place, previous employment (if any), sex. Also, waiting period on the exchange.

Finds that exchanges most effective in placing people in clerical and allied occupations. Also that 95% of placements are in the public sector (which fills 60% of its notified vacancies through the exchanges, in contrast to 3% - 4% for the private sector).

Also that registrants are generally ignorant of the "world of work". They have no vocational plans and lack an understanding of their own abilities and prospects. Furthermore :

i) Most registrants are matriculates only.
ii) Most registrants had had undistinguished academic careers.
iii) Most registrants have very low salary expectations.

Major recommendations:
i) Compulsory recruitment through exchanges for both public and private sectors.
ii) Training by the exchanges during waiting periods.

Weakness of the study : "Live registers" contain only a small percentage of those individuals actually unemployed, and "dead registers" are not accurate indicators of those individuals who have found work (as Nair claims).

Rao, V.K.R.V., University Education and Employment : A Case Study of Delhi Graduates, Bombay, Asia, 1961.

General survey of the SES of Delhi University graduates after eight and four years.

Interviews. Data from 482/1124 1950 graduates and 1381/2456 1954 graduates. Not a sample, but an attempt at a census.

Major findings:
i) Teachers down from 50% to 35%.
ii) Clerks up from 25% to 41%
   a) 73% of B.A.Hons. in 1954, vs. only 25% in 1950.
   b) 32% of B.Sc.Hons. in 1954, vs. only 5% in 1950.
iii) Employment in public sector up from 59% to 68%.
iv) Means of securing employment :
   a) contacts - 47% in 1950, 38% in 1954;
   b) advertisements - 24% in 1950, 31% in 1954;
   c) employment exchanges - 5% in 1950, 12% in 1954;
   d) Public Service Commission - 8% in 1950, 5% in 1954;
   e) arts, law, and commerce graduates rely more on contacts.
v) Length of unemployment after graduation :
   a) none - 18% in 1950, 10% in 1954;
   b) less than one month - 34% in 1950, 33% in 1954;
   c) one-six months - 18% in 1950, 23% in 1954;
   d) six-twelve months - 11% in 1950, 16% in 1954;
   e) one-two years - 13% in 1950, 14% in 1954;
   f) more than two years - 6% in 1950, 4% in 1954.

Srivastava, R.K. and Selvaratnam, S. 'Youth Employment in Ceylon - problem and prospects', Marga Vol.1 No.4, 1972.

In this paper the results of several surveys regarding the job preferences of (a) unemployed youth (having taken G.C.E. 'O' level), (b) unemployed university graduates, and, (c) university undergraduates, are drawn together. Among unemployed school leavers the data from three surveys (Labour Force Survey, 1968, Special Sample Survey I.L.O. 1971, Bank of Ceylon rural credit survey, 1969), reveals the over-riding preference (for both urban and rural youth) for clerical employment over teaching or any other form of employment. In the Ministry of Planning and Employment January 1971 survey of unemployed graduates (N = 6,200) 94% mentioned a preference for job in a government department. Very few were willing to consider the private sector or self-employment. A similar finding was reported in the I.L.O. survey of undergraduates (N = 336). 87% preferred the public sector, 10% the private and 3% self employment. Among reasons advanced for preferring public sector employment 'security' appeared overwhelmingly important, and particularly so for arts undergraduates.

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